

**Indiana Historical Bureau
Indiana Historical Marker Program
Program Guidelines**

(6/07 revision)

Adopted by the Indiana Library and Historical Board, June 1, 2007

[NOTE: Applicants are encouraged to visit the Indiana Historical Bureau website at www.in.gov/history to “Applying for a Marker,” “Examples of Marker Annotated Text” under Historical Markers and examine types of primary sources used to document information in a variety of marker texts.]

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- 1. Application procedures.**
 - a. Applicants for a state format historical marker must first complete and submit an official Application form by the published deadline. Information for ALL sections and blanks must be provided.
 - 1) No applicant may submit more than one Application for any deadline.
 - 2) Only one marker may be requested on an Application.
 - 3) Application “Section 3. Significance of proposed marker topic” and “Section 4. Sources/Documentation” are crucial in the evaluation process. Enough

information must be provided so that reviewers can clearly understand the significance of the topic that is being proposed as well as what resources are available—especially locally—to prove that significance. The applicant should review the section of Application Information titled “A Note about Sources.”

- b. The applicant must include the following items with the completed marker Application. Failure to send materials with the Application, or by the stated deadline as requested by the Historical Bureau, may result in termination of the Application process.
 - 1) The Statement of Significance required in Section 3.
 - 2) The list of Sources/Documentation required in Section 4.
 - 3) Photocopies of locally available primary source material required in Section 4.
 - 4) Provide an adequate description of the proposed marker location as required in Section 6, along with the following items:
 - a) at least one color photograph of the proposed marker location in order to demonstrate the appropriateness of the location for public access and safety considerations.
 - 1) If the proposed location is not an original or authentic location, in addition, enclose a photograph of the original or authentic location.
 - 2) If a structure is being marked, photographs showing all sides of the complete structure must be provided.
 - b) at least one detailed map clearly locating the proposed marker location, including compass and directional indications. If the proposed location is not the original or authentic location, enclose another map showing the spatial relationship between the original or authentic location and the proposed alternative location, indicating distance and direction.
- c. The Historical Bureau may solicit and/or submit Applications to fulfill annual or long term goals of the marker program in collaboration with individuals and/or organizations from relevant locations.

2. The Approval Process

Before a marker can be installed, it must be approved twice by the Indiana Library and Historical Board, on the recommendation of the Historical Bureau.

- a. The first approval allows the marker Application to move forward in the process. See Guideline 3. In addition to other factors, when an Application is recommended to move forward, the Historical Bureau, from its initial review, believes that the topic has statewide significance and that there are/will be sufficient primary sources to prove that statewide significance.
- b. The second, and final, approval allows the ordering and installation of the marker. Recommendation for this approval comes after the Historical Bureau has verified the significance of the topic through its additional research and has written and documented an appropriate text for the marker. See Guideline 4.
- c. In making its recommendations to the Board for approval, the Historical Bureau may limit the number of applications that move forward based on compliance with guidelines and program goals as well as an adequate number of agency staff to carry out required research for the markers recommended.

3. Step 1: Procedures for initial review of Applications

After receipt of an Application, the Historical Bureau will conduct preliminary research on the proposed topic.

- a. The Application will be reviewed by the Historical Bureau and its advisers for
 - 1) historical significance,
 - 2) availability of primary source documentation,
 - 3) inclusion of all enclosures require by Guideline 1.b, and
 - 4) compliance with Program Guidelines and any other relevant evaluation factors, policies, informational publications, and instructions.
- b. After this initial review, the Historical Bureau and its advisers will recommend whether or not the Application may move forward in the Application process.
- c. The recommendations will be acted upon at a meeting of the Indiana Library and Historical Board, after which the Historical Bureau will notify applicants of the decision. See Guideline 2.

4. Step 2: Procedures for Applications approved to move forward.

- a. After approval of the Application to move forward under Guideline 3. the Historical Bureau will send a report outlining the next steps in the research process to the applicant.
- b. Throughout the research process, the Historical Bureau may ask the applicant to supply additional primary source documentation necessary to prove historical facts for the marker text and annotation. The applicant is expected to provide by the deadline given any additional documentation, photographs, maps or other information requested by the Historical Bureau. Failure to return materials by the stated deadline may result in termination of the Application.
- c. The applicant should also review Guidelines 8 (The marker text), 9 (Relative importance of documentation), and 22 (Compliance with guidelines).

5. Requirements for ordering an approved marker.

The following items are required before an approved marker can be ordered. Failure to send items by the stated deadline as requested by the Historical Bureau may result in termination of the Application process.

- a. Provide the completed “Ownership and Permission” form. This form will be mailed to the applicant after the Application has been approved for ordering and installation by the Indiana Library and Historical Board. See Guidelines 2.b. and 4.
 - 1) The Historical Bureau will obtain permits for markers approved for installation on state rights-of-way. All other permits/permissions must be obtained by applicants. State format markers are the property of the State of Indiana. See Guideline 18.
 - 2) The Historical Bureau may require a change in location from the one proposed by the applicant before a marker is approved.
 - 3) Approval of all markers will be contingent upon receipt of permissions from location owners.
 - 4) For more information regarding the appropriate placement of markers see

Guideline 14.

- b. Provide the completed "Applicant Acceptance of Recommended Text" form. This form will be mailed to the applicant after the Application has been approved for ordering and installation by the Indiana Library and Historical Board. See Guideline 2.b.
- c. Provide the applicant's share of the money to purchase the marker.

6. Appropriate topics and significance.

- a. Marker topics may be events, individuals, buildings, sites, and other entities that have local and state significance; regional, national, and/or international significance will be recognized as well. Topics with only local significance are not eligible for a state format historical marker. A topic must have inherent significance over and above the matter of popular appeal.
- b. The mere fact of existence of an entity generally will not constitute significance. Rather, the role or contributions of that entity must have had an effect deserving of commemoration with a state format marker.
- c. The significance of a topic must be concisely described in Section 3 of the Application form.
- d. On the recommendation of the Historical Bureau, the Indiana Library and Historical Board may establish special initiatives to focus on specific topics for commemoration, alone or in collaboration with other entities. As needed, additional guidelines and/or formats may be approved for such special initiatives.

7. Restrictions on topics.

- a. No individual may be the topic of a marker until twenty years after his or her death, unless the Indiana Library and Historical Board makes an exception for a deceased person of state, national, or international significance.
- b. Marker topics, other than individuals, generally should date from at least fifty years in the past.
- c. Neither restorers nor current owners of a historic structure may be named in the text of a state format marker awarded to the structure.
- d. Topics with only local significance are not eligible for a state format marker.
- e. Topics/categories approved by the Board for special sign formats generally would not be approved for a state format marker. See Guideline 12.b.

8. The marker text.

The Historical Bureau, working with its advisers, has final authority for the text of a state format marker. The Historical Bureau shall write the marker text, which must conform to Historical Bureau research standards and format standards, including space limitations.

- a. The Historical Bureau will not include information in a marker text unless the Historical Bureau has been able to verify that information with appropriate documentation located by the Historical Bureau or provided by the applicant. The Historical Bureau will carry out a reasonable amount of research in an attempt to verify information from an applicant for use in writing the text of the marker.
- b. If a topic or subject purports to be unique (one of a kind, the largest, smallest,

oldest, first, etc.), there must be documentation—from unbiased and authoritative sources—which validates the claim.

- c. The Historical Bureau, working with its advisers, will recommend the marker and its text to the Indiana Library and Historical Board as part of the final approval process. Decisions of the Board shall be based upon the research, sources, and interpretation of the topic provided by the Historical Bureau working with its advisers and the applicant.
- d. If the Historical Bureau makes any changes to the marker text after Board approval, the final text of the marker will be entered in the permanent record of the Board.
- e. The applicant must accept the final text, via the "Applicant Acceptance of Text" form, before the marker can be ordered; failure to return the signed form by the stated deadline may result in termination of the Application or failure to receive state funding. If the applicant is not willing to accept the final text provided by the Historical Bureau, the Application may be terminated.

9. Relative importance of documentation.

In determining the accuracy of facts or statements, generally,

- a. primary source documentation takes precedence over secondary source documentation in the evaluation and interpretation of information;
- b. legal documents take precedence over private papers, such as letters or journals;
- c. testimony from disinterested and authoritative sources takes precedence over testimony from interested individuals.

10. National Register sites.

- a. Inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) does not automatically qualify an entity for a state format historical marker.
- b. When an entity listed in the NRHP or designated a National Historic Landmark is marked with a state format historical marker, the text of the marker shall include that fact.
- c. If an entity has a pending nomination for the NRHP, an Application for a state format historical marker will not be approved to move forward or processed until the pending nomination has been acted on by the Keeper of the NRHP.

11. Archaeological sites.

- a. A state format historical marker will not be allowed if its location and/or text might endanger an unprotected archaeological site.
- b. The Historical Bureau may work with the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, IDNR, and other appropriate parties to make determinations regarding applications that might fall under this guideline.
- c. The current version of "Society for American Archaeology Principles of Archaeological Ethics," will also be used to help make such determinations.

12. Official state historical marker and sign formats.

- a. The official state format historical marker design is distinguished by the Indiana outline at the top. Markers are 47.5 inches tall and 42.25 inches wide, with a dark

- blue background, gold lettering, and silver-colored border mounted on a silver-colored post supplied with the marker. Unauthorized use of this format/design is prohibited in IC 4-23-7.2-11(a).
- 1) State format historical markers are fabricated to the specifications of the Indiana Historical Bureau.
 - 2) No other logo or emblem may be included on a state format historical marker unless an exception is made by the Indiana Library and Historical Board, on the recommendation of the Historical Bureau for compelling reasons.
 - 3) Inclusion of artwork or a map on a marker may be approved only if the Indiana Library and Historical Board, on the recommendation of the Historical Bureau, judges that it is essential to clarify or enhance the interpretation of a marker topic. Extra costs for such non-standard markers must be paid by the marker applicant.
 - 4) Markers will carry a credit line as follows: “Installed [year] Indiana Historical Bureau and [name(s) of local funder(s)].”
 - 5) Markers will have different text about the topic on each side of the marker.
- b. On the recommendation of the Historical Bureau, the Indiana Library and Historical Board may authorize special formats for signage to honor categories of historical entities that enhance citizens’ understanding and appreciation of Indiana history and culture.
- 1) Special sign formats may be developed for topics/categories, such as historic cemeteries, standing historic county courthouses, standing Carnegie library buildings, historic districts or neighborhoods, historic bridges, and other topics/categories represented in multiple counties.
 - 2) As needed, specific guidelines may be approved for these special sign formats.
 - 3) Topics/categories approved for these special sign formats generally would not be approved for a state format marker.

13. State format historical marker sites.

- a. The location of a state format historical marker should be called the “site of a historical marker” or “a historical marker site.” The location should NOT be called “a state historic site.”
- b. The original or authentic location is the preferred location for a marker. If the original or authentic location for a marker is not accessible—or might be endangered—the marker may be placed in an appropriate alternate location nearby.
- c. If an alternate location is chosen, photographs and maps of the original or authentic location also are required by Guideline 1.b.4).

14. Installation of state format historical markers.

- a. State format historical markers should be installed in conspicuous places accessible to the public. Desirable locations are public highways, parks, and city streets where persons can stop safely and read the text for its educational value.
- b. If a marker is deliberately or accidentally installed in an unapproved location by the applicant and/or another entity, and if reinstallation at the approved location is

- required by the Historical Bureau, the applicant and/or the other entity will be responsible for all costs associated with the reinstallation at the approved location.
- c. Instructions for proper installation of markers will be provided to the applicant and/or another entity by the Historical Bureau.
 - d. Applicants must notify the Historical Bureau when markers have been installed.

15. Photographic documentation of state format historical markers.

- Photographic documentation of state format historical markers is a very important part of the program since images of markers are placed on the Historical Bureau website and used in the marker repair and maintenance database to monitor condition of markers. It is important for applicants/citizens to provide to the Historical Bureau photographic documentation of the installed marker in the approved location if,
- a. the Historical Bureau is not represented at a marker dedication/installation, or
 - b. a marker is damaged and in need of repair, or
 - c. a marker has been repaired, reinstalled, or changed in any way.

16. Dedication of state format historical markers.

- a. The Historical Bureau encourages applicants to hold a public dedication ceremony for a state format historical marker after it has been installed so that communities can celebrate or commemorate the topic of the marker and installation of the marker. The Historical Bureau will provide suggestions for the publicity, program, and ceremony.
- b. The following credit line must be included on any printed materials and in verbal presentations: “This marker is made possible through the Indiana Historical Bureau, State of Indiana.”
- c. A representative of the Historical Bureau will participate in as many dedication programs as possible.

17. Funding for state format historical markers.

- State format historical markers shall be purchased by the Historical Bureau from the approved state vendor using any type of funding available for that purpose. Current prices of markers will be provided to all applicants.
- a. Applicants may request— but are not guaranteed—a maximum grant of \$1,000 in state funds for a state format historical marker. Granted funds are not given to the applicant but expended by the Historical Bureau for the marker purchase. The applicant’s required cost share is the balance of the marker cost at the time the marker is ordered.
 - b. A local cost share is required for any state format historical marker installed with a grant of state funds. Local cost share monies help to fund a statewide repair and maintenance program for existing state markers.
 - c. Applicants may pay the full cost of a marker, which qualifies under the guidelines, and is approved through the normal process. Such markers are still property of the State of Indiana. See Guideline 18. Advantages to fully funding a marker include,
 - markers completely paid for without using Historical Bureau funds are not in funding competition with Applications requesting a grant of state funds, and

- they do not fall under the distribution criteria in Guideline 17.d. Because state funds are limited, applicants who are able to fund the full cost of the markers—or request fewer state funds—are encouraged to do so.
- d. Because one goal of the program is to have markers in all counties, the following distribution criteria apply to Applications requesting a grant of state funds, which are appropriated to the Historical Bureau every two years in the State of Indiana's biennial budget.
 - 1) Applications from counties with no or few state format historical markers will take precedence over Applications from counties with many state format markers;
 - 2) When more than one Application is submitted from a county during a biennial funding cycle, generally only one Application will be approved for installation with a grant of state funds;
 - 3) In the second year of a biennial budget, if there are not enough qualified Applications from underserved counties to expend the appropriated funds, a county may receive a second grant of state funds for a state format historical marker.

The preceding criteria do not apply to applications for markers that will be completely paid for with funds from other sources.
- e. The Indiana Library and Historical Board will not approve more than one marker to honor the same subject in the immediate vicinity, unless there is a compelling reason to do so.
- f. A grant of state funds for a marker will be valid only during the state biennium in which the marker was approved.

18. Ownership and maintenance of state format historical markers.

- a. All state format historical markers, and markers on state highway rights-of-way, are the property of the State of Indiana. The state encourages cooperative relationships for day-to-day site maintenance with local governments and private entities on whose land a state format marker is installed.
- b. Any state format historical marker needing repairs must be reported to the Historical Bureau. Marker repairs must conform to the official state format as described in Guideline 12.a. and Historical Bureau repair instructions. The Historical Bureau will work with local entities to maintain or repair existing state format historical markers using funds available for that purpose.
- c. Local site maintenance help for state format markers is desirable, but is not required for the approval of a marker.

19. Relocation, removal, or replacement of state format historical markers.

- a. State format historical markers may be relocated or removed only with the written permission of the Historical Bureau. All costs associated with moving the marker must be paid by the party desiring the relocation. Markers may be relocated,
 - because of persistent vandalism,
 - if a hazard to viewers may be reduced or eliminated,
 - if a more accurate location has been determined,
 - if a change in land use has occurred putting the marker in danger, or

- because of temporary construction work.
- b. State format historical markers containing incorrect information may be removed by the Historical Bureau.
- c. When replacement of a state format historical marker is requested because it has been damaged or stolen, or because the text contains errors, the marker shall be reviewed by the Historical Bureau according to marker guidelines in effect at the time replacement is requested. Some replacement markers will require the full Application process.

20. Authority.

The Indiana Historical Marker Program has been established under the authority of Indiana Code 4-23-7.2-11. Guidelines related to the Indiana Historical Marker Program are determined by the Indiana Library and Historical Board, as indicated in these Program Guidelines.

21. Approval of state format historical markers.

Approval of state format historical markers is determined solely by the Indiana Library and Historical Board upon recommendation of the Historical Bureau.

22. Compliance with guidelines.

- a. Applicants for state format historical markers and special sign formats must comply with the guidelines, any other relevant evaluation factors, policies, informational publications, and instructions of the Indiana Historical Marker Program.
- b. Failure to respond to a written request from the Historical Bureau within the designated time frame regarding any part of the state format marker or special sign application processes can result in postponement, termination of the process, and/or loss of state funding.

23. Access to archival files.

- a. All materials submitted by applicants for state format historical markers—or created by the Historical Bureau as part of its research for markers and signs—are the property of the Indiana Historical Bureau, State of Indiana and become a part of its archival files.
- b. Following installation of markers or special signs, those files are open for public inspection according to state access to public records laws.

24. Approval of non-state format markers.

According to IC 4-23-7.2-11(d), “No historical marker may be erected on a highway of the state highway system without the approval of the historical bureau as to its historical accuracy. This provision is in addition to any other requirement of law.” Anyone seeking installation of such a marker shall provide appropriate materials requested by the Historical Bureau in order to carry out this duty by the deadline date established. The Historical Bureau cannot be responsible for delays resulting from the failure of the requester to return materials by the deadline date established by the Historical Bureau.